

**Victory Lutheran Church- Jacksonville, FL**  
Pastor Troy Schreiner      www.victorylutheran.org

**Worship Series: *Lord, Increase Our Faith***  
**Service Theme: *Faith Delights in Duty***

**Sermon Theme: Serving God with “Get To” Joy (Oct 2, 2022)**  
**1 Chronicles 29:1-2, 10-18**

You can change the meaning of the phrase entirely by switching just one word. “I get to do something” vs. “I have to do something.” Think how different the tone is when someone says, “I get to go to the symphony on Friday,” and another person says, “I have to go to the symphony on Friday.” “I get to go to the symphony” expresses desire, excitement, and a joyful opportunity. But “I have to go to the symphony” expresses drudgery, obligation, and a burdensome chore. They’d rather be doing pretty much anything else, but their spouse, or boss is dragging them along.

There are lots of other examples. Going to school, or work, or the gym. Moving the lawn. Folding laundry. Cooking dinner. Some people would call those “get to” opportunities, while others would call them “have to” obligations. And we understand why. A “get to” activity is something that gives the person joy; or at least, they see enough meaning, purpose, and importance in the activity that they can do it joyfully. Whereas a “have to” activity is a necessary chore we do just to avoid negative consequences or receive some positive benefit. But it’s joyless.

But the most important example for us to reflect on: Is serving God a “get to” opportunity? Or a “have to” chore in your life? Supporting the Gospel ministry of the church with your time, talents, and treasures. Growing your faith in worship, Bible study, and devotional time. Sharing your faith with others. Obediently following God’s law. Living your life to glorify God. Are those joyful “get tos” or burdensome “have tos” for you? While some of my earlier examples could be either “get tos” or “have tos,” as Christians, we want to always be **Serving God with “Get to” Joy.** But how do we do that?

We see a prime example of “get to” joy from King David in our sermon text, as he praises God, ***“Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor.”*** You might assume David praised God in response to something amazing God had done for him. Maybe after a great military victory, or after God blessed him with vast wealth and power. But surprisingly, David’s joy wasn’t in response to something God had given him, but over something he had given to God!

By this time, David’s an old man, cognizant that both his life and reign as King of Israel would soon end. So he assembled the officials and leaders of Israel, and revealed to the assembly that in his younger days, when he was at his peak and living in a lavish palace, he’d wanted to build a lavish Temple, where God’s presence could dwell. But God told David that task wouldn’t be his. Rather, David’s son Solomon, the heir to his throne, would build God’s Temple in Jerusalem.

But that didn’t stop David from serving God with “get to” joy! As he told the assembly, ***“With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold...silver... bronze... iron...wood...as well as onyx...turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities.”***

Notice, King David wasn’t pulling these resources out of Israel’s national treasury. This was King David’s personal wealth! And “in large quantities” was no exaggeration! David tells the assembly that he gave the equivalent of 110 tons of gold, and 260 tons of refined silver to build the Temple. Today, that would be nearly \$4.5 billion, just in gold! All to build a Temple for God he’d never see! Motivated by David’s generous giving, the leaders of Israel gave an additional 375 tons of gold, 375 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, 3,750 tons of iron, and an unrecorded number of precious stones for the Temple. And not out of a “have to” spirit. God tells us they gave ***“willingly...freely...and wholeheartedly to the LORD.”*** With a joyful “get to” attitude, that they could serve God with their resources!

Obviously, the direct application of this account is about serving God with physical wealth. But the general application for us includes how we can serve God with our whole lives! So we need to take to heart what motivated the Israelites to serve God with “get to” joy, so we can have the same motivation, and serve God with the same joy!

David revealed two things that motivated their “get to” joy. First, David’s prayer clearly shows that David understood where everything he was giving to build God’s Temple came from. Notice a recurring theme in his prayer to God. **“Everything in heaven and earth is yours.” “Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom.” “Wealth and honor come from you.” “In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.” “Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”**

The people could have “get to” joy in serving God with their wealth, because as David acknowledged, everything they were giving to him, had come from him. And yet, God was still pleased by, rejoiced in, and used the gifts they were giving back to him!

It's like when you were a little kid, and wanted to buy a Christmas present for your Dad, so you ask him for some money to buy him something. And yet, even though you were giving him something that basically already belonged to him, he still thanked you, hugged you, and made use of your gift. Think how joyful it made you to give him something that expressed your love for him! Likewise, think how joyful it should make us to give God something back to God that expresses our love for him!

And more than just your money. Everything you use to serve God in your life is from him! Your body and mind; your time and abilities; your relationships; your career; your education; your opportunities. Everything you use to serve God is from God!

That changes our attitude about serving God with our life. If everything we have is from God, then serving him with those things isn’t some burdensome chore where God taxes everything we’ve worked so hard to earn for ourselves. Rather, serving God with our life

is a joyful, God-produced opportunity to thank the one who has so richly supplied us. We, who would have nothing without him, get to joyfully serve him with everything he’s provided for our needs!

The Israelites’ second motivation to serve God with “get to” joy is found in David’s words, **“The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God.”** Earlier, we identified that you can do something joyfully when you know there’s meaning, purpose, and magnitude to the action.

I think of the first responders called into action to help those affected by Hurricane Ian this week. I’d guess most of them would say that those rescue missions are “get tos,” not “have tos.” Not because they get joy out of people being in danger, but because they know that their work is important and meaningful. There’s a magnitude to their work, because people’s lives are at stake. And therefore, even if they might not find joy in danger, sleepless nights, and leaving their families, because their work is filled with purpose and importance, they can do it joyfully.

Likewise, David identifies the magnitude of their giving to build the Temple: they were serving the God of the Universe himself! That isn’t only meaningful because the holy God allows sinful, weak humans like us to serve him, but because God uses the service of sinful, weak humans like us, to serve his eternal, redemptive purposes! He uses our service to him to serve others and save souls! God uses the wealth we give to spread the Gospel of Jesus through his church’s ministry. He uses our time and talents to perform that ministry. He uses the vocations we carry out faithfully to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others. He takes our service to him, and maximizes it so that his eternal will and works are accomplished through it! What else can we do in our lives that has eternal meaning, purpose, magnitude, and results?

Again, it reminds me of childhood. When you’re 3, if your parents ask you to do any task, you see it as a “get to” opportunity, right? Unloading the dishwasher, folding laundry, picking up sticks in the backyard, no matter how mundane the task, you’re excited to do it.

Because you see value and importance in it, because Mom or Dad entrusted you to help with it! Can we have that same 3 year-old “get to” joy when God calls us to do something to serve him?

But if you ask that same child to do those tasks for you 13 years later, you often get a different response, right? Now, the teenager sees that work as a burdensome chore they have to do which takes them away from what they’d rather be doing. Don’t we often treat serving God the same way?

Again, is serving God with your life a “get to” or a “have to”? Do you rejoice in getting to serve God with your money, your time, or your talents? Or is serving God with your life a burdensome chore you do with a “have to” attitude, because someone made you, or so you don’t look bad?

Historically at Victory, whenever we’ve asked the congregation to financially support enhancing and expanding our Gospel ministry, you’ve given generously to serve Jesus! And that’s worth celebrating! Like David praises, ***“I have seen with joy how willingly your people...have given to you.”*** But when it comes to getting people to serve in our ministry with their time or talents, sometimes it feels like pulling teeth! Don’t get me wrong, there are people within this family of believers who willingly and joyfully serve God’s church whenever and however they can. Just yesterday, we had a great crew cleaning up our campus after Ian, and attending a Sunday School teachers’ meeting. But the “20% of the people do 80% of the work” mantra is often reality.

We host huge festivals that reach hundreds of people in our community for potential soul-changing Gospel ministry; we want to provide a chance for 0-3 year-olds to grow in their faith through Sunday School, and to give their weary parents a chance to grow in Bible study; meaningful, important opportunities with eternal impact! And yet, the calls for volunteers go unanswered. We had a majorly important meeting to determine the future of our church and preschool’s expanding Gospel ministry last Sunday, and only 30-ish people came. We have a pastor, who far too often has a “have to”

attitude about writing another sermon, prepping another Bible study, and visiting people who are physically or spiritually hurting, rather than a “get to” attitude that he gets to serve people with Jesus!

Are there reasons we don’t serve God as much as we ought? Maybe. But let’s be honest, we all need to seriously self-reflect whether serving God is a “get to” opportunity, a “have to” chore, or an optional task in our lives. Which means, like David, we all have to ask the same question: ***“But who am I?”*** We, who so often treat serving the God who has given us everything and uses our service for eternal value and importance, as some burdensome chore. Who am I, but someone completely undeserving of anything but to be eternally destroyed by God?

***“But who am I?”*** I’m also a redeemed, forgiven child of God, a recipient of God’s amazing grace in Jesus. He gave much more than billions of dollars in gold, silver, and jewels. He, the true Son of God, shed his holy blood and gave his life to death and hell. All so that he could build undeserving sinners like us into spiritual Temples where God’s presence dwells by faith. No doubt King David had his own treacherous sins, and the sins of the people of Israel in mind when he uttered those words. ***“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?”***

David could serve God with a joyful “get to” spirit, because he knew how undeserving he was of such a privilege. Because he knew how much God had given him, and how much God had forgiven him. And so can we! In fact, the only way we can serve God with a joyful, “get to” attitude, is when we’re constantly taking to heart the good news of what Jesus has done for us!

Thankfully, we were spared from too much destruction or loss of life from Hurricane Ian. But imagine if the storm surge flooded your house, and swept you out your front door into the churning water. But suddenly, you felt a firm grip on your arm, as a first responder plucked you out of the water, saving your life. Would doing something to serve the person who saved your life be a burdensome “have to” chore? No chance! You’d joyfully “get to” do anything you could to thank them!

That's why we can always joyfully serve God with a "get to" spirit—because as you were being helplessly swept away to Hell in the flood of your sin, your Savior Jesus pulled you to eternal safety!

So, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been given everything we need to serve God in the most meaningful, eternally impactful ways. We have been forgiven of everything, so that our souls have been saved. So marvel at this fact: Undeserving sinners that we are, we get to serve God with our lives! May God always give us that joyful "get to" spirit, by faith in Jesus. The very thing which King David prayed for you, nearly 3,000 years ago. ***"LORD...keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever."*** God grant it!